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Applying Christianity in the Spirit of St. Francis

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Two Churches

TWO CHURCHES FIGURE WITH SPECIAL prominence in the St. Clare seventh century celebration in August. They are the basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and the Portiuncula, and the basilica of St. Francis, famous San Francesco of Assisi. The body of St. Clare in its precious reliquary will be brought from its permanent shrine at Santa Chiara to visit one of these churches. St. Clare will grace the feast at the Portiuncula in a previous number, then make the pilgrimage to San Francesco to mark the seventh centenary of the dedication of that basilica (1253), and then return home for the solemn novena at her own St. Clare's.

St. Francis founded his order with St. Mary of the Angels as its focal point. He never saw San Francesco, for it was built two years after his death in 1226. It is not hard to imagine what St. Francis thought of the temple named for his holy founder and built in his honor at the behest of her friend and Francis' friend Pope Gregory IX, onetime Cardinal of the Holy See of the Lateran. San Francesco, especially in the three-

fold glory which today distinguishes it, is a magnificent structure from the viewpoint of both art and engineering. Clare was doubtless as delighted with it—what she will have known of it considering that she was a shut-in soon to die when the consecration took place, on the fifth Sunday after Easter that year—as delighted with it as Pope Gregory, who saw it rise until 1241, and Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254), who saw it completed and who dedicated it; as delighted as Elias, to whose lot it fell first as vicar general of the order to issue command in 1227 for carrying out Pope Gregory's plan and then from 1232 to 1239 as minister general of the order to supervise the execution of the plan; as delighted as such loyal sons of St. Francis as Leo, who we are assured lived part of his long life at San Francesco and was entombed there (cf. Goad, *Franciscan Italy*, p. 179 on).

If later in the history of the order the comparative magnificence of the edifice was used by zealots as a cudgel with which to beat Elias, the reason for the beating lay deeper; it was just a convenient stick

with which to vent their spleen on the man who had to discipline them.

It is not likely that Francis himself would have found fault, against the pleasure of two great popes, if the subject had been anyone else but himself. Francis may not have been, indeed was not, a man that liked display where he or his friars personally were concerned, but he was a man that went all out with whatever means he had at his poor command to build worthy houses and tabernacles of God; and if he found gold for a tabernacle, gold went into its making (cf. *FORUM*, June, p. 165).

And that is the point at issue here. Francis did not see the present basilica of the Portiuncula either—only its little chapel and the plain friary, but you can be very sure that the Little Portion was something so exquisite for cleanliness and general neatness that people who came there for the Great Pardon of the Portiuncula indulgence had something to tell about—and to emulate when they went back home!

Every age has its characteristics, and grandeur was the trait of St. Francis' day, from the cathedrals they built, to the institutions they established, to the Crusades they organized, to the Faith they began to live. Much lay in the particular attitude they took as to what was grand. In general it may be said that with St. Francis' day a reaction set in against exterior display and toward simplicity of expression, so that St. Bonaventure somewhere says the acme of art is not in the last thing you can add but in the last thing you can dispense with without let but lift to your idea.

That is the idea, at any rate, back of the Franciscan idea of perfection through poverty—detachment from all earthly vanity, to be the freer to devote oneself and all one has to God and His cause. Whatever allowance even Francis might make to the times and the particular circumstances, certainly he and Clare and all his loyal sons and daughters would subscribe to that principle as the general norm for how Franciscans should live personally

and how go about the activity which falls to their lot—a minimum for their personal needs and wants, a maximum saved and promptly invested toward the Cause.

That goes for money and display about all. It goes for time and effort expended. It goes, even if it sounds like a paradox, with our pursuit of perfection in the sense that we become less interested—to put it crudely—in the figure we are cutting before God and man, less interested in the daily balance of spiritual successes and failures, and more keenly, intensely, grossly taken up with love of God, praying for it, purifying our intentions more and more, feeling the pinch of sacrifice more and more, deliberately welcoming disregard and humiliation more and more, anything to have God take over more and more and keep ourselves out of the picture.

That is the lesson St. Francis took from his own building and repairing churches—a house and home worthy of the God who dwelt in it, where nothing was but what should be and nothing was wanting but what had no place there. Only, if one sees the propriety, indeed the obligation, of acting that way regarding God's material dwelling, how much more should his spiritual dwelling reflect nothing but what is God or of God and less to God.

Hence devotion to the spiritual life, love of God, on our own behalf and that of others. Hence too a mind, and further a body, worthy of God in us. Hence, further, due living conditions for the body as well as for the soul which are to honor God in man. Hence, the best of social conditions, the best of worlds in which God's temples on earth, the souls of men, are to take their worthy place.

That is the dialectic of self-sanctification and of the apostolate so far as St. Francis saw a place for it—God in the center, souls for him, our own and those of others. That is the magnificent temple of the children of St. Francis are called to realize. And what a sight that sort of Crusade is bound to be on our triumphant return to the heavenly Jerusalem!

How a Life
Was Keynoted

Part Second

By Albert Nimeth
O.F.M.

St. Francis and the Eucharist

IT WAS A GALLANT ATTEMPT, AND FRANCIS was reluctant to turn back, but what could he do? A violent storm had driven the helpless ship to the coast of Slavonia. Originally it was destined for the land of the Saracens. It was there that Francis wanted to launch his bold enterprise of preaching to the infidels. This was about 1212. Now he was stranded.

When he tried to get passage back home, the seamen would not have him and his companion aboard. Undaunted, they stowed away amid the ship's cargo. Only when the ship was well out at sea did they emerge from their place of hiding. They landed in the city of Ancona, and immediately they took up their former missionary activity of preaching from city to city. The people flocked to hear them.

The Hallmark

There was one exception however—the Cathari, a heretical sect. Joergensen, who notes this fact in his *St. Francis of Assisi*, gives this reason: "The kernel of his preaching, as of all his religious life, was the absolute, unconditional, and (even) inessentials things, blind obedience to the Roman Church, and the principal consequence thereof, a deep reverence for the priests of the same Church." Francis did not even want to consider sin in them.

But that was exactly what the Cathari wanted to do. They were vociferous about the sins of the priests, and thus lured away many of the faithful. Francis, however, was the type of person that had the good sense to discriminate. The priest was in touch with the Holy of Holies here on earth, and despite his imperfections, St. Francis saw the radiance of the Eucharist shine on him. That was just another way in which he manifested his love of the Eucharist. Out of reverence for the

Blessed Sacrament he respected the minister of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was this same love which made him so anxious that priests be worthy of their dignity. He did not hesitate to tell them so: "I likewise beg in the Lord all my brothers who now are and will be and wish to be priests of the Most High that when they wish to celebrate Mass, they should be pure, and in a pure and reverent manner perform the true sacrifice of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with a clean and holy intention, and not

There is no waste of words. Francis for any earthly return, or out of fear or love of any man, as if to please men. But let all their will, so far as the grace of the Almighty favors, be directed toward him, in the desire to please with it the sovereign Lord alone, because in it he alone acts, as it pleases him." (*Words of St. Francis*, Meyer, 192b.)

The Blessed Eucharist was the favorite theme of the writings of St. Francis. He never writes of it in an offhand manner. The thought which keeps coming back again and again and which he feels compelled to impress on anyone who will give him a hearing is this: "In this world I see nothing bodily of the most high Son of God except his most holy Body and his most holy Blood."

Among the collected words of St. Francis there is one group called *Admonitiones* or Reminders. They are genuine nuggets of spiritual counsel on religious life. The first and the longest of them is on the Blessed Sacrament. As we study these words, we discover an interesting presentation of St. Francis' conception of the Eucharist.

He begins by commenting on a passage from the fourteenth chapter of St. John. The quotation begins with the words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and includes Philip's inquiry and our Lord's

answer, "He who sees me, sees the Father also." From this St. Francis shows that Christ is the visible manifestation of the heavenly Father. Being a spirit, God can be seen only by a spirit. The conclusion St. Francis draws is this: "And so it was that those who saw our Lord Jesus Christ only in a human way and did not see nor believe that he was the true Son of God, as the spirit and his Divine nature demand—they all stood condemned" (Meyer, *ibid.* 191).

Having made this point, Francis continues: "And so now with all those who see the Blessed Sacrament, sanctified by our Lord's words on the altar, through the hands of the priest, in the form of bread and wine; if they do not see and believe, as the spirit and the Divine nature demand, that it is truly the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, they stand condemned. For it is the Most High who bears witness to it. He says, "This is my body and the blood of the New Testament" (Mk. 14, 23), and, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting" (Jn. 6, 55).

There was no waste of words. Francis gets to the point and drives it home. To him it is as simple as that. With the doctrine presented in this manner, with the sincerity of the saint behind every word, who can fail to get the impression that here was Something that formed the very center and soul of the Christianity which St. Francis practiced? He wanted others to share his treasure with him. He wanted to arouse the faith and enkindle the love of all hearts. In the impassioned plea that concludes this Reminder he yearns to make the Eucharistic Christ as real, as living and as glowing a personality to those who hear him, as the historical Christ was in the eyes of the apostles and disciples. That is how vivid the Blessed Sacrament was to St. Francis.

The Recurring Theme

In order to carry this message to the people, Francis often resorted to letter writing. "In the matter of letter writing," says Fr. Cuthbert, "Francis was no niggard." Not many, it is true, have come

down to us, but of the eight still extant five treat of the Blessed Sacrament entirely or in great measure. In these he treats the subject with such ardor and enthusiasm that you cannot help but feel the intense devotion of the saint.

One of the longest letters he wrote was addressed to all the faithful. It was written at a time when he was weak and feeble and had to curtail his preaching. In this letter he recalls to the faithful the incidents surrounding the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. "It is his will," he adds, "that we all should be saved by him and receive him with a pure heart and a chaste body. But there are few who care to receive him and be saved by him, though his yoke is sweet and his burden light" (Meyer, *ibid.* 230 b).

He returns to his theme later: "We should in particular confess all our sins to the priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever does not eat his flesh and drink his blood, cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. Let him, of course, eat and drink worthily, because whoever receives unworthily eats and drinks judgment on himself, not distinguishing the Body of our Lord" (*ibid.* 230d).

In a later paragraph he reiterates: "We must likewise visit the churches often and be respectful to the clergy not only for their sake, if they are sinners, but for their charge and ministry of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar, and receive and distribute to others. And let us all be firmly convinced that no one can be saved except through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." (*ibid.* 230f). "All they, however, who are not repentant and do not receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . are blind, since they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ" (*ibid.* 230m).

Not content with a letter to all the faithful, Francis wrote a particular letter to the clergy. He realized that all his effort toward a general spiritual rebirth would come to naught unless there was a renovation of spirit among the clergy. That was

the principle he followed on his missionary journeys. After speaking to the assembled crowd, he would "invite the clergy into a place apart where he could not be overheard by the faithful, and exhort them particularly to be solicitous in keeping the churches clean as well as the altars and things belonging to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments." On occasions of this sort his audience was small.

But he wanted to reach all clerics and do what he could to stop the widespread abuses connected with the celebration of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments. In the letter to the clergy, therefore, he plunges right into his subject with a courage born of love: "Let all of us who are clergymen note the great sin and the ignorance of which some are guilty with regard to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the most sacred names and written words which sanctify the body. . . .

"Let all who administer mysteries of so very holy a nature, and especially those who minister thoughtlessly, give careful attention to how wretched are the chalices, corporals and other linens where the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is sacrificed. And many leave it in wretched places and convey it along the way in a regrettable fashion, and receive it unworthily, and administer it to others without due concern. . . .

"And all this does not move us with loving concern, though our Lord is loving enough to entrust himself to our hands, and we handle him and receive him on our lips day after day! Do we not know that we are destined to get into his hands?

"Well then, let us be quick and determined to do better in these matters and others like them. Wherever the most holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ may be put away or kept in a way that is not proper, let it be removed from there, to be put away and reserved in a respectable place" (ibid. 216).

The Shining Example

Not only by word did St. Francis plead

for greater reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, but, more important, by example he tried to make the people aware of the sublimity of the Blessed Eucharist. One example of an external form of homage that is common today is the matter of genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament and bowing during Benediction at the words "Veneremur cernui." This practice became more prevalent after the introduction of the feast of Corpus Christi in 1264. (Incidentally, the feast of Corpus Christi was a natural culmination to the impetus given by St. Francis.)

Now, forty years before Pope Urban IV bade St. Thomas compose an Office for the feast, St. Francis indicated his practice when he said: "And while it (the Blessed Sacrament) is being offered up by the priest in the sacrifice of the altar, or is being carried to any place, let all the people on *bended knee* render praise, honor and glory to the Lord God, living and true." Even before this he taught his followers to *bow low* to the earth whenever they saw a church, in order to salute the Divine presence. It may not be too important a point, but historically considered, it would seem to indicate that the trend toward Eucharistic devotion was inaugurated by St. Francis of Assisi.

When St. Francis drew up the Third Order rule, he ordained that the members were to receive Holy Communion three times a year, at Christmas, at Easter, and at Pentecost. In the light of its historical setting this was indeed a bold step. Recall the spiritual sluggishness of the times and the mild prescription of the Lateran Council enjoining Holy Communion at least once a year. On this point Fr. Oswald in *The Third Order of St. Francis* writes: "Obviously, it is intended as a minimum, and perhaps frequent confession and communion would have been considered so startling an innovation as to have rendered any rule to that effect in great measure impracticable."

If we are to accept the word of Fr. Mariano of Florence writing in the fifteenth century, Francis had intended to

(Turn to p. 238 col. 2 below.)

The Franciscan Way
To God

By John F. Faddish
O.F.M.

Seventh Instalment

As a Seal On Thy Heart...

ALL THE EARTH STANDS STILL WHEN human lips sing the praises of Mary, and all human affairs give way to her who is the Queen of Heaven and Earth. As we tread the road of Franciscan perfection, every Franciscan heart instinctively pauses to chant the praises of Mary. We seek to gain strength from her who said, "He who is mighty has done great things in me." The great spiritual energy emanating from Mary can provide us with the necessary help as with God's grace we work out our salvation.

Close to Mary

A story has come down to us of a saintly friar who was granted a vision of Heaven. As he penetrated the realm of eternity, he beheld the Blessed Mother surrounded by a great multitude of faithful. But drawing closer to the Queen, he beheld a sad spectacle. As a child finding itself in the midst of countless numbers of strange people looks anxiously for someone it knows well, so the friar sought out his fellow Franciscans. Near Mary there were Benedictines, Dominicans, and members of other orders, but he failed to see any of his confrères. "What might be the cause of this?" he inquired reverently of the Blessed Virgin. She smiled, and lifted aside her mantle of blue, and there he beheld his brown-robed confrères close to Mary's heart.

While this story betrays special patriotism, it does point to a beautiful truth—the truth that the sons of St. Francis have throughout the centuries been the champions of Mary's prerogatives, even under the most unfavorable conditions. Francis loved it so, for here in this Marian They have carried her banner aloft and through her intercession have led numerous souls to God.

In a previous instalment we referred to deathbed scenes as always memorable, and the more dynamic the personality of the dying person, the more impressive and lasting the memory. For us followers of the Poverello, the things which transpired that October night in 1226 as he lay preparing to meet the eternal Judge are memorable and sacred indeed. The dying saint was anxious to bequeath some special gift to those who had forsaken all to follow his footsteps. Emotion filled his heart as sentiments of joy and sorrow battled for supremacy in the fateful hour. Tears, not of bitterness or regret, but of joy rolled down his cheeks.

At last he found an appropriate gift for those whom he loved. He would leave to his sons this beautiful chapel, the motherhouse of his little fraternity as a perpetual heritage. "Should you be driven out one way, come back another way, for this place is truly holy and God's abode." In pleading tones he begged his friars never to desert the sacred spot of the Portiuncula but to keep it close to their hearts. This sacred trust is as pressing today as it was the night Francis lay dying, readying himself for eternity.

Beautiful traditions have arisen concerning the Portiuncula. In the days of Francis it was commonly believed that angels were wont to descend from Heaven each evening there to chant the praises of God's immaculate Mother in her "little portion" of the Portiuncula. That is why chapel, under her protection, the new life which Francis began to take shape, and he wished every Franciscan to revere the spot, as he would his own mother who gave him birth in the order of nature.

Today the little chapel which Francis knew and loved is enclosed in a huge structure of stone called the Basilica of

Our Lady of the Angels. People still journey to Assisi to see the spot, the heart of the Franciscan world, and they look reverently on the little portion now housed in the basilica.

Portiuncula in Our Heart

There must be in every Tertiary's heart a "little portion," a Portiuncula, set aside for the Blessed Virgin Mary. In that little portion she must reign as queen, and none else shall dare enter the sacred spot. She is "everybody's sweetheart"—this Queen of all Hearts, and to those who honor her as queen she will be the gate of Heaven, as Francis foretold in his last moments. This is what the author of the Cantic of Canticles (8,6) implied with the words, "Put me as a seal on your heart"—it is Mary who wants to reign in our hearts and this seal is for all the pledge of future glory.

Every Franciscan heart must of necessity be a Marian heart. The two are synonymous. No Franciscan need ever take second place to anyone when it comes to honoring Mary. From Bonaventure and Scotus to Bernardin of Siena down to the humble lay brother praying before Mary's image in the convent choir or the little, aged Tertiary mother praying for her wayward daughter—all have been the champions of Mary.

While theologians zealously defended the prerogatives of Mary, hundreds of thousands of simple Franciscan souls were content with honoring her in their heart, and in the sanctuaries of their homes. And among the forms their devotion has taken, none is more beautiful or more richly blessed by the Church than the chaplet of the Franciscan Crown, the pious recollection of Mary's Seven Joys. From the beautiful cloister gardens reverberating with the echoes of the Hail Mary of the Friars to the unknown Tertiary kneeling in his home after a hard day's work, fingering the beads, all are weaving a daily crown to be placed on the head of their Queen by our father and founder, St. Francis.

The Seven Joys

There are many lessons we can gain

from the meditative recitation of the Crown of the Seven Joys. Each day we can unite ourselves with Mary in a spiritual pilgrimage and from each joy garner some memento which will help us weather the storms of life.

Briefly, we find in her first joy, the Annunciation, a fundamental lesson for our spiritual life. We gaze in wonderment at the sacredness of this moment when time and eternity stood still, awaiting the answer of the humble Maiden kneeling in prayer. Here is the cure for our inflated ego, which loves to extol its accomplishments and its "ne'er-do-fail" plans for the future, and which finds an answer to every domestic ill save the closest to us. Here is the woman chosen to fulfil the most sublime mission an ordinary human being could perform, and she simply places back in the hands of God her answer, saying, "I agree." Her Fiat translated into practice in our life, could make better Christians, happier individuals, and better followers of Francis of all of us. The humble Maiden of the Annunciation will teach us to be instruments in the hands of God, and given this realization, all things work unto good.

As Mary journeys to visit her cousin Elizabeth, we find a further proof of her humility. She teaches us in this joy not to shrink from work, especially the more menial tasks about the home. Indeed, the Mother of God, carrying in her blessed womb the Lord of Heaven and Earth, did not consider it beneath her dignity to make this tiresome journey and to do the housecleaning and the many other little household chores for her cousin Elizabeth.

In the third joy we find a lesson of perfect charity. It was the beginning of a complete emptying of self on the part of Christ. As followers of Francis we will begin to forget counting the cost of the sacrifices we must make either because of our rule of life or as dictated by Christian charity. Can we imagine what a calamity it would have been if Christ had decided to die only for his friends on Calvary? The awfulness of the thought is brought out when we begin to realize that the en-

tire human race was at enmity with God through original sin. He who said during his lifetime, "Greater love than this no man has than that he lay down his life for his friends," is "going us one greater" by dying for his enemies. That is a perfect lesson in Christian charity, and it was made possible by the birth of Christ at Bethlehem.

The Magi with their precious gifts teach us in the fourth joy how we should honor and adore God. Their gifts were the things most precious to them, and so must we bring to God the greatest gifts we have in our life. To be sure our soul is the most precious thing we can offer God, but we must seek to remain in union with him in thought and sentiment throughout the day. He is our creator, worthy of our adoration; he is our brother, deserving of our love; he is our friend, standing ready to hear our petitions and answer them. May our petitions be like Mary's—whatever his Divine will desires, for when we give ourselves completely to him, he gives himself completely to us.

We know how happy we are to find anything we have lost, and the dearer it is to us, the greater the rejoicing. Any mother knows the anxiety that fills a mother's heart when she finds that her little son who had been riding his tricycle around the block, has suddenly disappeared. All sorts of thoughts, from those which presume kidnaping to being run over by a car, pass through her mind in quick succession in such terrible moments. Mary felt that way when her Divine Son was missing. She had been under the impression that her Son was with the male element of the pilgrimage party. Now in alarm she hastened, with Joseph, back to Jerusalem, where she found him again, and that in the Temple.

To the Tertiary father and mother there is inspiration in this joy of the finding of Jesus. They will learn how to love their children with all the love a human heart can shower on them, and yet they will realize that they have not received absolute dominion over them. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's

business?" How many Tertiary parents, while good in many respects, do all they can to crush the seed of a religious or priestly vocation in the heart of their children! Mary's resignation to the answer of Jesus will help them in their difficulties.

In appearing to Mary after his resurrection Christ signalizes the love every child must have for his mother. The happiest moments of our life are shared by her who gave us birth, and in appearing to her Christ rewarded Mary, his co-sufferer, by showing her that he was truly risen from the dead, that her trust had not been in vain. A Tertiary parent will see in this joy that it is not the many hours of amusement which constitute their children's greatest happiness and fondest memories, but those of a spiritual order, which will be carried to the grave. When parents teach their children the principles for which Christ's death and resurrection were the seal, there awaits them the eternal gratitude of their children in Heaven and eternal happiness with Him whose co-sufferers they were on earth.

Finally comes the triumph of Mary's faith and hope in her assumption into Heaven and her coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth. She whose life began in obscurity, whose recorded words in history are so few, but whose great achievement it was that she was ever a devoted mother, is now crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth. Surely, she was assumed into Heaven because of the sublime role she had played in the Incarnation, but between the Annunciation and the Assumption there was the lifetime of devoted service of God, and alongside the seven joys of her life there were the seven Swords of sorrow which pierced and gnawed at her heart. In imitation of her, Francis could cry for hours that "Love is not loved."

The Franciscan who devoutly recites the Crown and meditates on its fruits can procure for himself sufficient strength to imitate the heroic virtue of Mary at least to a small degree, and with it also the heroic sanctity of his founder and father, St. Francis. ●

This Is the Spirit

From the Life of
Cardinal Merry del Val

By Fr. Marcellus Manzo
O.F.M. Cap.

THE BEATIFICATION OF POPE PIUS X has shed light on the character of his secretary of state, the saintly Cardinal Merry del Val. Living in close contact for many years with the Franciscan Tertiary pontiff Bl. Pius X, Cardinal Merry del Val learned the Franciscan way of life.* In fact the cardinal's life resembles that of the saintly pontiff particularly with regard to his Franciscan charity. It was this charity which gave color to his generosity of soul, his condescending simplicity, his love of holy poverty and his personal purity of heart.

This same charity he nourished toward Seraphic St. Francis. We are told by his biographer, Msgr. Pio Cenci (Rome, 1953, p. 384), that his private apartment displayed the pictures of those who were close to his heart. Among them was the image of St. Francis. Everything Franciscan was of interest to him. Franciscan friaries and shrines had a particular attraction for him. Thus Rieti, Assisi, Mount La Verna, Monteluca, Greccio, and Fonte Colombo still speak of his friendly visits. To these places the pious cardinal came time and again, because he found unusual joy there in recalling and venerating the footsteps of the Poverello.

Recalling the memory of Cardinal Merry del Val, Fr. Publio Jacoboni (Cenci, p. 514) says regarding the Franciscan attachments of this pious prelate:

"... Everyone knows that our cardinal loved St. Francis. The cause of this particular affection may have been due to an affinity of his soul to that of St. Francis

or to a similarity of outlook on life. It may have been due to a poet's love of nature, . . . drawing the soul to converse with God or to that preference given to spiritual values over material . . ."

Perhaps all these reasons put together made for the cardinal's Franciscan enthusiasm. Greccio was for him the Bethlehem of St. Francis; Fonte Colombo the Mount Sinai of Franciscan life, with its atmosphere of peace and tranquillity; Poggio Bustone the height of Franciscan contemplation; the valley of Rieti the Franciscan Galilee; Mont La Verna the Franciscan Calvary; Assisi the birthplace of early Franciscan inspiration and fervor. Cardinal Merry del Val visited these places, usually staying several days for the sake of recollection or recreation.

October 1926 marked the seventh centenary of the death of St. Francis. Great celebrations were under way in Assisi. Cardinal Merry del Val was sent there by the Holy Father as Papal legate. On that occasion the Franciscan soul of this noble prelate revealed itself in an inspiring discourse. He expressed the joy he felt at being in Assisi in order to honor the Seraphic founder. With thankfulness he referred to the Roman Pontiff who had selected him as Papal representative on the solemn occasion. He pointed out the meaning of Francis to Assisi, to Italy, and to all the Catholic world.

It was a long and eloquent homily, to which the multitudes listened with tears in their eyes. His conclusion was made complete with a prayer addressed to St. Francis:

"O Seraphic Father St. Francis, meek and humble, incomparable model of all virtues, be a guide and a consolation to suffering humanity. Bless once more your Assisi as you did long ago in that autumn sunset which signalized your blessed de-

*It is not known to us definitely whether Cardinal Merry del Val was a Franciscan Tertiary. From his interest in things Franciscan and the general response of churchmen of his day and country to the pleas of Pope Leo XIII, it may be presumed. The author of this article has written to Rome for documentary evidence.

parture from this life . . . Bless the whole Catholic world, the Church of God, and all of us who wish to serve Christ in order to reign with Christ for all eternity."

Among the various Franciscan friaries and shrines, Cardinal del Val had a preference for the friary at Fonte Colombo in the famous valley of Rieti. This friary attracted him because of its austere surroundings, of the ancient hermitage of St. Francis there, and of its diminutive chapel inspiring devotion together with the colorful panorama around it. Here too he enjoyed the company of the simple Franciscan novices, with whom he spent his hours of recreation. In the friars he saw Francis. Hippolytus Mele O.F.M., recalling the frequent visits of the cardinal to Fonte Colombo, said, "All that was Franciscan interested him . . . In his visits (to the Franciscan shrines) he was intent on seeing everything that had any relation to St. Francis of Assisi."

Fr. Jacoboni, pastor of the parish church in Rieti, speaking of the inner life of the cardinal, describes his austerity: "The hairshirt, hidden away from indiscreet eyes, the simplicity of his private apartment, the frugal meals, his longing for solitude, the spirit of prayer and complete dominion over himself, his unruffled spirit when met with the contradictions of life, the will to suffer in silence, his fervent devotion to the sufferings of Christ and to the Sorrowful Mother—these were all spiritual traits which give us a glimpse of his beautiful soul" (op. cit., p. 747).

For these reasons, it is not to be wondered at that St. Francis, the saint of detachment, was so close to his heart. The Seraphic founder renounced all things in order to attach himself unreservedly to the cross of Christ. St. Francis craved suffering and mortification, a craving which found satisfaction on Mount La Verna, when he felt in his body the wounds of Christ. It was this life of hidden suffering in St. Francis which drew Cardinal Merry del Val as if by magic to follow Franciscan ideals and visit the shrines which spoke of Franciscan prayer and penance.

In May 1930 the Conventual Friars held their general chapter in Assisi. Cardinal Merry del Val had been their cardinal protector for many years. For the occasion he had prepared an exhortation, but it was not to be, for God called the good cardinal to himself. Nothing was known about this exhortation until some time after his death. Then Msgr. Placido Nicolini, the bishop of Assisi, going through the private apartment of the deceased cardinal, discovered it.

The exhortation, intended for the Conventual Friars of Assisi, was like a last will which Cardinal Merry del Val left to the children of the Seraphic Father, in whose interest he lived and worked. It contains a wealth of thoughtful counsel in keeping with the Franciscan spirit. Among other things he reminds the friars of the holy life of the early Friars in their perfect observance of the rule. He speaks of the sublime vocation of the Franciscan life and of the glories of the Franciscan order in the past.

Undoubtedly the Franciscan spirit, so evident in the cardinal's life of devotion, gave a Seraphic coloring to his virtues. There truly was something Franciscan in his unruffled modesty, his simplicity, his detachment from all earthly gain, his childlike cheerfulness, his love of retirement from earthly distractions, and his burning love for the interests of God and of souls. His love of souls was Christlike. If it made St. Francis leave his native land to travel to the Orient and preach before the Sultan in order to gain souls for Christ, it made Cardinal Merry del Val spend many years, even as cardinal, in order to imprint the image of the heart of Christ on the poor youth of Trastevere in Rome. His life's motto can be seen today engraved on his granite sarcophagus: "Da mihi animas, cetera tolle—give me souls, away with the rest."

Cardinal Merry del Val died on February 16, 1930. Hippolytus Mele O.F.M., guardian of the friary of Fonte Colombo, on October 24 (the feast day of the cardinal) in the same year, had a marble tablet placed at the Franciscan shrine of Fonte Colombo. It was an expression of

affection and at the same time a commemoration of the cardinal's frequent friendly visits to this ancient Franciscan shrine. On this occasion the above-mentioned Fr. Jacoboni spoke on the Franciscan spirit of the cardinal. He spoke of the affection borne by the cardinal for St. Francis, and of his frequent pilgrimages to the hermitage of Fonte Colombo, where St. Francis is known to have lived, prayed and done penance. It was here also that our Seraphic Father received the approval to his rule of life.

The orator referred expressly to the manner in which death revealed the character of Cardinal Merry del Val: "The death of this dignitary of Holy Mother Church was for many a true revelation. It was a breaking of the alabaster jar of ointment, the perfume of which filled the whole house. Cardinal Merry del Val was a great man. He himself was not conscious of his greatness; and if he was, he tried to keep it hidden. He was so condescending that his august presence inspired friendly reverence.

"His ecclesiastical career was a gradual rising, as natural as the rising of the sun . . . His handsome presence was marked by virile reserve, which bore the traces of his aristocratic origin. These qualities made him every inch a priest of God. And

indeed his bearing, solemn yet serene, majestic yet not distant, impressed everybody, for each one saw in the cardinal a true representative of Christ" (op. cit., p. 747).

On the second anniversary of the cardinal's death, *Osservatore Romano* wrote an impressive article on Cardinal Merry del Val. The following paragraph is selected here as bringing into relief the greatness of Cardinal del Val—greatness enhanced by his love for the lowliness of St. Francis of Assisi, whose spirit he followed not only at Fonte Colombo, at Assisi and at the Carceri, but also in the secretariat of state at the Vatican, in his dealings with dignitaries of Church and State, in his priestly friendliness with the poor of Rome, in his fatherly care of the youth of Trastevere:

"The memory of Cardinal Merry del Val still lives in the annals of the pontificate of Pius X. It shines forth with the perennial brightness of his virtues . . . As the name of Cardinal Consalvi enhanced the name and greatness of Pope Pius VII, as the name of Cardinal Rampolla glorifies the reign of Pope Leo XIII, so the name of Cardinal Merry del Val stands close to the work of restoring all things in Christ, the life purpose of Pope Pius X."

Franciscans — How Many?

A Look
At Directory Figures

Draw Your Own
Conclusions

HOW MANY FRANCISCAN BROTHERS AND sisters are there in the United States?

It is impossible to say to the exact last person. For one thing, it is hard to find a complete tabulation anywhere. For another, the nomenclature varies as to designating both contingent units and membership categories. And thirdly, it proves quite impossible to get specific data from all units comprised, because for one reason or another replies are not forthcoming. That apparently is a difficulty under

which such experienced and capable annual agencies as the *Official Catholic Directory* and the *National Catholic Almanac* labor.

It was definitely one of the handicaps to completeness under which thirteen years ago the compiler of *The Fruitful Ideal* labored. Past executive secretary Fr. Maximus Poppy of our federated provinces of the Third Order Secular put in a good year or two of his time in order to present the data eventually appearing under publica-

tion date of 1941. It may be said that his *Fruitful Ideal* pioneered in the matter of bringing the various Franciscan contingents to book and to due classification.

The Fruitful Ideal was notable for listing not merely the various communities and their membership and work, but also their several foundations by state, municipality and local address and name, all in compact, easily surveyable form. The classification compiled by Fr. Maximum was later followed in principle if not in all its details by other agencies, although there has never since been anything available that brought the entire picture to the reader in such full detail as well as unbroken sequence, including full tabulation of Third Order Secular units.

There has been no re-issue of *The Fruitful Ideal*. Perhaps none is necessary, first of all because at least the general scheme of it is still valid, and secondly because much of its ground is covered by the Barth-Gubala *Franciscan Education Directory* of the U. S. published in 1950 and *The Third Order Secular of St. Francis* published in 1951 by the Executive Board of our federated secular Tertiary provinces. But neither of these two publications gives data on personnel figures.

In view of this lack, the spirit moved Ye Ed to compile what data were available in the Religious Orders section of the 1953 Official Catholic Directory pp. 713-752, supplemented in a small way by comparison with the Diocesan section of OCD and with data from the National Catholic Almanac 1953 pp. 312-331. Apart from a measure of obscurity as to exact numbers due to divergent terminology, we believe the statistics here given are so close to reality in identical categories as to be practically pat with it.

1. *The First Order* of St. Francis shows a total of six provinces, 8 commissariats and 3 Mexican foundations with in all 3,108 members for the Friars Minor; of four provinces and 913 members for the Friars Minor Conventual; and of three provinces, 1 custodia, and a section of the Irish and the Polish provinces with in all 903 members for the Friars Minor Capuchin. Here and elsewhere throughout

this article the numbers include novices and oblate tertiary brothers in the several contingents.

The total First Order membership thus is 4924. Of these 3996 are clergy and 928 are lay brothers.

2. *The Regular Third Order of men* is found listed in OCD with six contingents; to which the National Catholic Almanac adds two more, but of these latter we have not the numbers but only the names to offer, to wit: The Missionary Brothers of St. Francis of Detroit, and the Franciscans of Christ the King of Camden, a Colored community; both being composed of lay brothers only.

The six OCD communities are: The Third Order Regular of Penance (T.O.R.) with two provinces and one commissariat and a total of 323 members (294 clerical, 29 lay); the Society of the Atonement with 197 members (133 clerical, 64 lay); and the lay communities of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn with 133 members, the Poor Brothers of St. Francis Seraph (Cincinnati) 57 members, the Franciscan Missionary Brothers of the Sacred Heart (Eureka) with 23 members, and the Franciscan Brothers of the Holy Cross (Springfield) with 23 members.

The regular Third Order of men thus totals 756 members, 427 being clerical and 329 lay brothers.

Let it be noted, however, that a priest member heads the Springfield brotherhood.

Recapitulating the Franciscan orders of men, we thus have a total of 5,680 members, of whom 4423 are clerical and 1257 are lay religious.

3. *The Second Order*, or the Poor Clares, shows a total of 20 monasteries, including two monasteries of Capuchin nuns and counting in the monastery of Los Altos overlooked in OCD in the Religious Orders section but found in the Diocesan section of the San Francisco archdiocese; with a total of almost exactly 500 members, of whom approximately 436 are choir sisters and 64 externs.

4. *The Regular Third Order of women* is listed in OCD with 73 various congre-

gations explicitly designated as Franciscan by title or position; to which the National Catholic Almanac adds three further listings of OCD as following the Franciscan rule.

OCD sisterhood numbers 47 to 112 are explicitly listed as Franciscan—a total of 66 numbers, which become 73 when one allows for the inclusion of six A's and a B in the series. Deduct one from the number to allow for No. 108, which is missing in the series. But then add OCD's 12A for evident reason, and to the list add OCD's 34, 39A and 127, which the National Catholic Almanac declares to be Franciscan, and the total of 76 congregations is complete.

This is ten more than The Fruitful Ideal listed in 1941. The difference is in new arrivals on the scene plus at least two congregations which were missed in the 1941 canvass (83A and 87A).

It may be said here in addition that OCD's 79A for 1952 is omitted in the 1953 Religious Orders section, while NCA still carries it but does not designate it as Franciscan; we omit it. Similarly with one or two other communities regarding which we have in the columns of The FORUM raised the surmise that they might be Franciscan: we adduce here only what OCD or NCA or both set down as Franciscan.

At the same time, to show how uncontrollable the field can be, two additions to the total have come in in the past years. One is listed by OCD and NCA—the Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph of Patricroft, located at Slingerlands, N. Y. (55B). The other is too new in arrival for listing—the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa (Uganda), a community of six members established in Brighton, Mass. in February this year. In other words, that puts the total up to the minute at 77 distinct communities of Franciscan convent sisterhoods.

And now for the membership numbers of these various congregations!

30,960 is the total we have been able to reckon mainly from figures given in OCD. That is an increase of 3,416 over Fruit-

ful Ideal's listing of 27,544 in 1941, and an approximate net gain of 3245 for the 12 years, or 270.4+ a year—the exact figures cannot be had, because, as said, two congregations with about 170 members in all were missed in The Fruitful Ideal canvass. That is an 11.8% increase for the period. Decide for yourself whether that is good or not so good. It is a deal less than an average of 1% a year! Even allowing for deaths and other inevitable defections, no wonder there is so general a complaint that "we can't make ends meet."

To break down the 30,960 general total: we have the widest variety of totals for the several sisterhoods, from thousands of members down to two. It must be kept in mind here that we are dealing with community totals actually functioning in or from the United States some of which have their roots abroad, the group here being only a contingent of a widespread, indeed worldwide, organization. Also, there is not the same policy among sisterhoods of forming provinces when a specified number of members is reached: other factors enter the formation of provinces.

As it is, topping the list are the Felician Sisters (52) with six provinces and 3,498 members in the States besides their members abroad. Next in order for numbers are the School Sisters of St. Francis (81) with 2,487.

There follow four additional sisterhoods with more than 1000 members here: the Glen Riddle Sisters (73) with five provinces and 1630 members, the La Crosse Sisters (49) with 1123, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the T.O.S.F. (96) with three provinces and 1064 members, and the Poor Sisters of St. Francis Seraph of P.A. (80) with two provinces and 1009 members. There is therefore a total of six sisterhoods in this country with more than 1000 members.

By contrast, there are five sisterhoods with less than 10 members and sixteen additional sisterhoods with less than 50 members—in all 21 with less than 50. Nine further sisterhoods range from 53 to 99

members, twelve more from 116 to 279 members. In all, therefore, there are 42 groups with less than 250 members and 35 with more than 250.

For beyond the 250 membership group, eleven further contingents bring the number from 255 to 456, eleven more from 512 to 749, and seven additional groups from 825 to 940. Thus, 29 plus the six in the 1000 group total 35 sisterhoods with more than 250 members—well over half the total number of sisterhoods.

But mind again the numbers these sisterhoods large and small may have in their home country and elsewhere, abroad!

Recapitulating, we find that the regular or convent Franciscan religious of the country, with 5,680 for the orders and congregations of men, 500 for the Poor Clares, and 30,960 for the regular Third Order sisterhoods, total 37,140 members in the United States.

5. It would be nice if we could add to this compilation something dependable as to present numbers in the Third Order Secular, but nothing of the kind is available. The Executive Board report of 1951 lists a total of 1115 groups of Tertiaries but says nothing of membership numbers. The Official Catholic Directory for 1953 assigns a total of 1800 local fraternities and 250,000 members (page 752), presumably including all Canada. The National Catholic Almanac for 1953 assigns 110,000 members for the United States (p. 334). For 1941 *The Fruitful Ideal* (p. 89) assigned 94,090 Tertiaries Secular, meaning Tertiaries organized in fraternities, therefore not counting unattached Tertiaries, namely, all those who are rightly or wrongly isolated. Who is to say, therefore, what the actual numbers are?

The number, however, of Tertiaries once duly received and professed but never or no longer active in fraternity life without actually renouncing membership in the order—their number, I say, must be very considerable. So very many just grow careless and stay away from meetings and neglect the prayers and other practices of the order. Some are never again heard from. Others cooperate again with the

grace and come back into good standing after a year, or five years, or ten or more years, or on their sick or dying bed, while not seldom it happens that after death a reception and profession card is found among the deceased's personal effects and sent in to headquarters for whatever consideration may be fairly given.

Reckoning with such lapsed Tertiaries so to call them, and the few (at least, there should be but a very few!) legitimately and formally isolated Tertiaries, the writer personally is prepared to lean toward OCD's 1953 figure of a good 200,000 total of Franciscan Tertiaries Secular even for U. S. That there should be such a problem as quite 50% of our Tertiaries being thus unorganized, is for the powers that be to study—and, to forestall!

The main thing of course in the order are not our numbers but the way we comply with the spirit of St. Francis in point of self-sanctification and of our activity. As to the former point, God alone is the judge; similarly as to the spirit we put into our work. In the latter regard, however, there are certain external indications that may serve as clues, notably as to the kind of work undertaken by the order in all its contingents. OCD offers edifying data on that particular subject. God willing we shall return to them.

make reception of Communion a weekly or at least a monthly obligation. Only because Cardinal Ugolino, the friend and adviser of St. Francis, feared that such a rule would alienate people that were otherwise well disposed toward the Third Order, did St. Francis reduce the number to three times a year.

Francis spent a great deal of time before the Blessed Sacrament. A friend of his one day asked him what he did in those long hours at the foot of the altar. "My son," replied the saint, "I ask you in return, what does a poor man do at the rich man's door, the sick man in the presence of his physician, the thirsty man at a limpid stream? What they do, I do before the Eucharistic God. I pray, I adore, I love!"

(More to follow in a later issue.)

The Third Order Apostolate

From *La Vie Franciscaine*, Paris, by Ignace Marie Dujardin O.F.M., with parenthetical remarks by the Editor.

The Challenge

"In their daily life let them strive to lead others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications that are a menace to virtue, to be brought into their homes, or to be read by those under their care."—Rule 2-8.

In an article such as this it is impossible to speak of everything, it is a matter of judicious selection. The term "good works" shall occupy our attention and, with it as our point of departure, we will try to present something like a balanced coverage of the duty of apostleship incumbent on the Third Order.

The text of the rule is clear: The Tertiary must devote himself to good works.

We would like to translate that as: The Tertiary must come out of himself; his piety, his efforts at perfection may not be self-centered, because that would no longer be the Third Order; the Third Order must of necessity issue in action, in apostleship.

That poses a more serious problem than is usually thought. It is a problem anticipated at the beginning of this century by certain anti-clericals when they averred that the Church in the Third Order was assuring herself of a picked army unconditionally dedicated to her service.

But in desiring to develop "true Christians" by means of the Third Order, the Church merely wants to point out to us that a person cannot be truly Christian if he is an egoist bent in on himself, however conscientious he be otherwise in observing the practices of personal piety.

But do all the members of the Third Order realize what a very special obligation they contract in accepting their rule

so far as concerns this dedication of themselves through the medium of action and apostleship, of Catholic Action as required?

There are still old-fashioned Tertiaries who believe that everything is all right if they are faithful in wearing the habit, saying the office (which at that can be considered as a form of apostolate), attending the monthly meeting (though in no spirit of brotherhood), or complying with any other personal practice that to their mind makes for Christian perfection in keeping with the limited range of their selfish desires.

In order to convince them, let it suffice to call to their mind that only recently, on February 10 and at Easter 1952, twice therefore, the holy Father Pope Pius XII launched an urgent exhortation for action on the part of Catholics. They are to shake off their lethargy. All loyal souls, all who are interested in the destiny of the world are to see what they are about and join ranks; to put their hand to the plow. Ours is actually a world that has to be rebuilt from its foundations. The alarm must be sounded for a vigorous awakening of thought and action . . . for rousing people's determination . . . because lethargy of the mind and anemia of the will are at the root of prevailing ills. We must be resolved to instill life where now we encounter death!

Apostolate— But in What?

To declare, however, that there is an obligation for Tertiaries to embrace the apostolate is not enough, indeed it can cause trouble, unless the nature of the apostolate is specified to which they should devote themselves. "Good works" is a threadbare term, vague, harmless, a term that readily provokes a smile.

How are we in our day to translate the term?

The reply that comes spontaneously is, "Catholic Action." By this time all of us have heard of the repeated appeals of the Popes for vigorous Catholic Action. There is no further room left for doubt on the subject so far as concerns the present-day duty of Catholics; it is unnecessary to insist on the point.

(In the United States practically it is less the individual bishop than the body of our Hierarchy which is the voice of Catholic Action—through the National Catholic Welfare Conference and its departments. One of these departments is exactly our federation of Tertiary provinces. The point of mutual relation between the NCWC and our federation is our so-called Bishop Protector, at this time Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. Through our Bishop Protector the federation remains ready for any mandate which NCWC may pass on to it while in turn what the federation initiates becomes—as well as of Precept 2-8.)

mandated Catholic Action, subject of course to the sanction of our Bishop Protector, resp. the NCWC. Self-evidently, the local bishop retains his full right as the head of Catholic Action for his dioceses, and local Tertiaries and Tertiary groups should be the first to heed his wishes.)

We should cheerfully wish every bishop might get the surprise which fell to the lot of a French bishop. Coming to preside at a gathering of Tertiaries, the bishop was astonished to find among them the people of his diocese that were the most active in all the local Catholic Action projects.

For that matter, in many a place there are Tertiaries who cannot get to the monthly meetings regularly just because of their duties in the various pursuits of Catholic Action. Is that always a good thing? In many cases I believe they should have the courage to put the problem straight up to their Fr. Director or Visitor, for it cannot be denied that a Tertiary needs the meeting if he is to live up to his profession.

Before we turn the page, let us frankly remind our brothers and sisters who are in the position for it, of their strict duty as Tertiaries, a duty resulting from their

profession, of engaging in the pursuits of Catholic Action. (Think of the very first article of the rule—loyalty to the Church!—as well as of Precept 2-8.)

Beyond Catholic Action

But the Christian apostolate is not limited to the forms, general or specialized, that constitute official Catholic Action. Yet, is that not what people too generally believe?

If the apostolate were thus limited, many of our brothers and sisters in the Third Order would not find the opportunity to apply this obligation of the rule of which we are speaking, because many of them have neither the time nor the requisite qualifications to pursue the formal apostolate of Catholic Action.

But there is no need for alarm. The Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, has answered this question. It is an extremely important text, and I make no apology for reproducing it at length:

"All the faithful without exception are members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ. It follows that the natural law and still more urgently the law of Christ place on them the obligation of good example in leading a truly Christian life. For we are the fragrance of Christ for God, alike as regards those who are saved and those who are lost (2 Cor. 2, 15). All likewise are pledged, and today more and more, to think in their prayers and sacrifices not only of their personal needs but even more of the wider intentions of the kingdom of God in the world according to the spirit of the Our Father taught us by Jesus Christ himself.

"Can it be asserted that all are equally called to the apostolate in the strict acceptance of the term? God has not given everybody either the opportunity or the qualifications for that. It cannot be demanded that the activities of this apostolate be taken up by the wife and mother who is rearing her children in a Christian way and who moreover has to do the household work in order to aid her husband in supporting his family. Thus the call to the apostolate is not directed to everybody.

(Continued on page 249)

Is It Worthwhile?

Eighth of a Series on 12 Conferences on St. Clare

THE WORLD AND THE WORLDLING LOOK on the life of a contemplative as wasted or at least unnecessary. They fail to see the actual value of it because they do not know the value of prayer. The life of a contemplative is primarily a life of prayer, and St. Clare of Assisi is a classic example of it.

A contemplative loves our Lord and wants to keep in his company; desires to converse with him. The contemplative, as also any good Catholic, should regard prayer first as an end, and then as a means. The end of our existence is that we should glorify God; the act of prayer embodies the first element of worship. At the same time prayer is the indispensable means to secure the grace of God without which we cannot achieve our end, neither here below, nor beyond.

In spending their life in this way, St. Clare and all contemplatives are giving God the greatest honor and helping their fellow men in the best manner. To urge you to appraise prayer the more highly, we will consider the essence and the urgency of prayer.

1. *The Core of Prayer*

1. Prayer is an act of worship. We know that God is good in himself, and has been good to us. Yet we have not been good to him, although we want to be good. Because God is good, we love and worship him, and prayer is one of our main means of doing that, by uttering his praises. Since God has been so good to us, we thank him. In doing so, we have the prayer of thanksgiving. Because we have not been good to God, we apologize and try to expiate our sins. We thus offer the prayer of reparation. Finally, we want to be good, and we ask God for the graces to help us be what we should be. In this way we have the prayer of petition.

Prayer viewed in this light, in the knowledge of God's goodness, is very rea-

sonable and a "natural" for man. The more you realize God's goodness and your own lowliness, the more you will give yourself to prayer. Contemplatives like St. Clare have the clearest view of this truth and hence desire to spend their life in prayer, not only in their own name but in that of all their fellow men.

You should have more than a workable knowledge of prayer, since it is so important to you. You can improve your prayer if you study the prayers of the Pharisee and the Publican in the Gospel.

The Pharisee starts out well with the words, "O God." He puts himself in God's presence, which is the thing to do. Then he adds, "I thank you,"—thanksgiving is an essential part of prayer. He has the right idea still. But then he deviates sharply from good prayer. His thanksgiving was to himself more than to God. What he said amounted to, "O God, here is something worth looking at; see what I

By Executive Secretary
Fr. Philip Marquard

have made of myself"; whereas he should have prayed, "I thank you for creating me, I am grateful for my good parents, my home, the true faith; each day I appreciate your forgiveness of my sins and the strength you give me to avoid sinning anew; I thank you for letting me come to this temple to praise you with the others humbly kneeling here in love."

Now look at the Publican's prayer. It was short, but it possessed the essential things. He prayed, "O God, be merciful to me the sinner." That is the prayer of the creature: Have mercy on us—be a creator still, look with compassion on your tiny creature. Give your light and strength, because there is nowhere else they can come from.

This prayer of the Publican brings out our need of God. It shows the creature realizing his true position. "He made us, and not we ourselves," as Scripture puts it. When we know that we are creatures, and look to God for everything—existence, forgiveness, grace, heaven—that is prayer.

2. Good prayer takes effort. Languid and careless prayer is scarcely prayer at all. "Johnny, what did you say to God this evening?" asked his mother. "Nothing, mother. I only said my prayers." That will not do. We must be in earnest. Conviction should always be translated into action. If you are convinced of the necessity and beauty of prayer, then it will have an important place in your everyday life.

If we have little appetite for prayer, we must force ourselves to pray well. Our driest prayers can be our best. God is ever the same good God, and worthy of our prayers whether we feel like it or not. Our prayers and God's mercy, as someone has said, are like two buckets in a well; as one ascends, the other descends.

Therefore good prayer possesses confidence. When a ship at high sea sends out an SOS, it does not know whether another ship will pick it up or not. It hopes desperately that it will. But no SOS of a soul in distress can escape God's knowledge. Definitely he would not order us to pray if he did not intend to answer our prayer.

On being made bishop of Cochin China, Msgr. Lefevre proclaimed that his very first action would be the founding of a contemplative Carmelite monastery at Saigon. Someone ventured to comment, "Necessities ought to precede luxuries in the building up of a diocese." Overhearing his remark, the bishop replied, "What you consider a luxury is to me the first necessity of the Christian ministry. Ten nuns who pray will help me as much as twenty missionaries who preach."

Surely a wonderful testimony to confidence in prayer. It brings out clearly what the Church thinks of the prayerful contemplative life too. It should inspire you to spend more time in prayer, or at least to make your prayers count when you are about them.

2. *The Urgency of Prayer*

1. Prayer has wrought miracles. It puts God's infinite power at our disposal. If we become souls given to prayer, all is won. The best way to arrive at this point is to develop a sense of our urgent need of God.

The Church in her official prayers often cries out: "O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto you" (Ps. 101, 2). "Let my cry come unto you," shows urgency, like some mountain climber crippled and dying on a mountainside, calling into the darkness in the hope of a rescue party.

You find other pictures of the same thing in the words of the holy Mass. Take for instance the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost: "Bow down your ear and hear me, for I am needy and poor." We are like starving beggars and cripples in quest of the spiritual food of real life.

There are even bolder prayers, so to say, accusing God of breaking his agreement if he does not comply, as on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost: "O Lord, look to your agreement"; or again, on Sexagesima Sunday, even accusing God of sleeping: "Arise, why are you asleep?"

All these prayers convey the same idea: that we cannot carry on without God, that we have need of him, that it is a matter of life and death to raise up our mind and heart to him. As much as our lungs need air, we need God.

In many situations prayer is the only answer. If you know how to pray, you save the day. Instance the rather recent televised program of the Gold Cup speed-boat race on Lake Washington near Seattle. A tragic crash killed two racers. William O'Mara, reporting the sports classic, dropped to his knees, blessed himself, and led the vast television audience in prayer, spontaneously declaring: "I hope no one will be offended, but I am a Catholic by religious choice and I know only one thing I can do now for those men. Won't you join me in saying the Lord's Prayer for them?" That is making the best of a situation in which you are otherwise completely helpless.

2. In many things quality is more important than quantity. This is particularly true of prayer. You find some people who have a temperamental facility for praying. With others it is just the opposite. Some have it at one stage of their life and not at another. Those who have it, can naturally spend more time in set prayers. This is enviable.

There is an aridity of the soul for which we are blameless. It is a trial by which God often leads a soul closer to him. St. Teresa of Avila ate this hard, dry bread for eighteen years: She encouraged all who suffered similarly "to remain at their post," for nothing so cleanses a soul of self-love and prepares it more for Divine grace than humble, patient, loyal perseverance in prayer without consolation. Even the candle which is not burning is still an ornament on the altar.

We should, however, make a honest effort. This is shown by the attitude we have toward recollection and mortification. St. Teresa says: "If the oven door is left open, the heat is lost." Whoever is dissipated and unmortified, will never attain to intimate communion with God.

The secret then is that we must try for reality in prayer, especially that sense of our urgent need of God. Begin by placing yourself in the presence of God.

A Detroit mother had a son in the combat forces in Korea. She prayed constantly for his safe return. Feeling the need of a physical outlet for her emotions, she bought a miniature church with small lights in its interior, and she placed it on a table near the front window of her home. She stood a little soldier in full battle dress in front of the little church. Later she wrote and told her son what she had done, and how she prayed the Rosary every day near her little church for him.

The son read the letter to some of his buddies. They asked if they too could be

counted in on the prayer and be represented in front of the miniature church. Now twenty-four soldiers in their uniforms, each with his name on his own little wooden base, stand in front of the church in the lighted window.

This good woman was intent on making her prayers count. Her urgency led her to make sure that she, her son, and his buddies were kept in God's eyes. You will find yourself pushing God more when you really want something desperately. But what you must do is realize you need God just as much in everything you do and for the very temporal and spiritual life in you.

We must be like the Apostles in the Cenacle after Christ's ascension. They did not formulate grand plans for the future. No. They prayed. As Scripture reads, "They continued steadfastly in prayer." What a tremendous reward was theirs. The Holy Spirit filled them with the profoundest graces. They emerged changed men.

If you recall, the Apostles begged Christ to teach them how to pray. "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11, 1). His answer was: "In this manner shall you pray: Our Father, who are in Heaven" (Mt. 6, 9). Is it any wonder that St. Francis attached so much importance to the Our Father? St. Augustine also declares, "If we wish to pray properly, we cannot do it otherwise than it is done in the Our Father." And St. Thomas Aquinas adds, "The Our Father not only teaches us how to pray, but also gives order to our interior disposition."

Some in their pride spurn the Our Father and look about for intricate prayers. No wonder they are still spiritual pygmies. Ask St. Francis and St. Clare to lead you into the spirit of prayer, which as St. Francis instructed, should never be extinguished. ●



QUESTIONS

Who is entitled to the suffrages for the dead prescribed in 2-14? And who is to offer the suffrages, etc.?—S.S.

The question comes from an officer in one of our larger cities. There the fraternity is not seldom confronted with occasions where the reception-profession souvenir card of a member is sent to headquarters after the death of the member, yet no record of the person's membership can be found on the official records of the fraternity, nobody seems to remember the person as a member, indeed there is nothing but the souvenir card to show—just one of the many, many Tertiaries that in the course of the years lost touch with the fraternity and the order.

The problem opens up a number of questions relative to due control of membership such as befits a religious order. What is done in the fraternity to supervise membership? What is done about members frequently absent from meetings, and for long periods of time? Are they just dropped from the active list without further ado? No investigation made as to the reason for their absence (new and different home conditions, illness, helplessness, mere carelessness)? No effort at reclamation if needed, or other fraternal concern where needed? No promoter or other district officer system to look up the respective members and keep them alert? Perhaps an envelope-return plan for the meetings, but no further personal contact on the part of the fraternity?

All that would not be very prudent, human beings being what they are, yet it quite surely accounts for much waste of otherwise good Tertiary material. What would happen with our convent religious if there were no more concern than that about them on the part of the order, which, once the member has shown the good will of persevering through a more or less

strict postulate and novitiate up to public profession, ought to be father and mother and brother and sister all in one to the member?

Supposing, however, that due supervision of membership is exercised, including a due measure of control over weakly, listless members; and that nevertheless track is lost of a member over a period of years, so that one must assume the member was eventually given up in despair as a hopeless case: there there is certainly no obligation on the part of the fraternity to extend the *special favors* of that particular fraternity to the deceased—such as Masses offered and the like.

There is *no obligation* either for the fraternity as such to extend to such deceased even the general favors prescribed by the rule in 2-14, meaning assembly at the obsequies and Rosary: these public favors rest on the presumption that the member publicly conducted himself as a member of the fraternity.

There is, however, nothing to prevent the fraternity from doing such a member the *gratuitous act of charity* for the sake of the good will he once showed, as attested by the reception—profession souvenir, and—well, people do act the strangest ways!—perhaps still cherished in spite of all appearances to the contrary. This we say especially since precept 2-14 itself asks that even visiting members join the local fraternity members in the general suffrages of the order, therefore not tying these suffrages in with fraternity membership.

Of course, if the deceased were known to have renounced membership or to have been scandalously unworthy of it, prudence would require that no public display be made. Privately? That is something else again. Who else would pray for him?

The Militant Life

The Tertiary in Public Life and Service, by *Mark Hegener O.F.M.*

A few years ago *Fortune* magazine (Jan. '49) ran a lengthy article on the rising force of Catholicism in American Labor. It concluded the article with the strong statement of John Cort, one of the founders and administrators of ACTU (Association of Catholic Trade Unionists), to those who think that the Catholic labor movement can become dangerous:

"Yes, and so is life. When St. Francis kissed the lepers, there were doubtless many who pointed out that that was a highly dangerous activity. ACTU may not have the reckless courage of St. Francis, but in a smaller way it is risking contamination to bring Christ into the dirty streets of the industrial world."

Fortune stated that since 1934 Catholic social action doctrine "has been an increasingly important factor in labor. It offers a radical yet positive philosophy, with concrete social and economic objectives." Continuing, the magazine quoted the Catholic position as aiming to "establish the 'personal dignity' of the worker, democracy in the union, and industry councils in which labor and management would be joint partners." All of these aims are in accordance with the encyclicals of the Popes.

This philosophy and program of Catholic Action are called important in the *Fortune* article, because Catholics constitute a large bulk of the labor population. One fourth of all American labor leaders are Catholic. Non-Catholic labor leaders will testify that the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists has been an influence for good in many unions, notably in Detroit.

ACTU is called "the most militant and most criticized force on the Catholic labor front." It has been under fire from the Communists (*The Daily Worker* avers

that the newest of the Vatican's alleged plots is its attempt to "take over" the American labor movement); from some "liberals," who call it a "religious pressure group"; and from some conservative Catholic churchmen, who fear that the group will not always be prudent, even though Pope Pius XII sent a congratulatory message to the group on its tenth anniversary in 1947.

ACTU's strongest roots are still in Detroit, and the Detroit chapter of ACTU had its roots in a kind of Franciscan beginning. The chapter began its career with an organizational meeting whose provisional officers were Paul Weber, the late Paul Ste. Marie, and Sebastian Erbacher O.F.M., attached to Duns Scotus College, as chaplain. Leon Sullivan O.F.M. later became associate chaplain. Fr. Sebastian, by the way, also is the author of an excellent book of Franciscan meditations entitled *Seraphic Days*.

Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit, gave the new movement his blessing and encouragement in messages to the officers and in several public statements. His Eminence also solved the problem facing the pioneers in the labor apostolate by providing a training school for aspiring apostles. This Archdiocesan Labor Institute offered evening courses in forty-one parochial schools for Catholic working people. These schools were backed by social action schools for the clergy.

One of the first projects of the chapter was the preparation of an ACTU catechism by Paul Weber and Fr. Sebastian, to serve not only as an organization aid, but also to correct reports circulated about the new group by critics.

We have no space here to give a detailed account of the history of ACTU.

This series is entitled "The Tertiary in Public Life and Service." In that connection we would like to say a word about the late Paul Ste. Marie, who died at the age of forty-one in 1946. One of the Detroit chapter of ACTU's founders, Ste. Marie insisted from the start on emphasis on "personal spiritual reform," writes co-worker Norman McKenna. "A member of the Third Order of St. Francis, Ste. Marie was also a zealous organizer among Ford workers. His ability and integrity won him the presidency of the big Ford Local 600 UAW-CIO in May 1942."

Ste. Marie was one of the pioneers of the United Auto Workers organization in the sprawling, populous Ford plants at a time when Ford management was bitterly and violently fighting unionization. It was the time of the "Battle of the Bridge," when UAW (now CIO) President Walter Reuther and Dick Frankenstein were beaten by plant guards for distributing union pamphlets outside a Ford plant.

When Paul Ste. Marie died, his funeral gave the labor movement pause—union officials, among them Socialists, pro-Communists and others of no notable religious sympathies, were startled to see the body of their associate clad in the humble brown robe of a Franciscan Tertiary.

The story is told that a young Communist, come to pay his respects to a member of his union, looked down at the body of Paul Ste. Marie, saw the Franciscan habit and immediately turned to his heavy-set partner, a trifle embarrassed by the obvious Catholic atmosphere of the house they were in. "Darn, Joe," he said, "I always knew the guy was a Jesuit."

The sight provided a golden opportunity for Catholic unionists to explain to puzzled non-Catholics how a man could be as zealous in religion as he was in unionism. All ranks, creeds and races in the UAW were represented in the throng of mourners at Ste. Marie's funeral. Top officials of the UAW bore Ste. Marie to his last resting place.

His fellow unionists paid a final tribute

to Ste. Marie by raising a fund of \$18,000 to help his widow in the care and education of the nine survivors in the family, only one of whom was then of wage-earning age.

Paul Ste. Marie died April 11, 1946, dead because of a heart condition which dated back, it is said, to a factory with open windows and freezing winds, all done for the sake of production speed-up. But he was of that key group which has come forth from the Church to assume leadership in the vital mass movements of today. Catholic life in this country regrets his death.

Certainly the Franciscan spirit continues to exert itself through the century in labor circles, beginning with Count Albert de Mun and Leon Harmel, on down to our own day, "risking contamination to bring Christ into the dirty streets of the industrial world."

Fr. Sebastian Erbacher, first chaplain for the ACTU group in Detroit, writes:

"Paul had a very friendly disposition. He could give a very able account of himself in any meeting. This he manifested to the satisfaction of all who heard him at the first Catholic Social Action Conference in Milwaukee Wis. He had the highest regard for priests. His wife and his many children will testify to his virtues as a husband and father. His work among the union men often necessitated his absence from the home in the evening when the family would have preferred to have him in their midst. But Paul made this sacrifice in the interests of good unionism."

We cannot expect our working class Tertiaries to have the "reckless courage of St. Francis" but we can expect them to take a real interest in the Catholic labor movement, to learn its principles and objectives. By the voice of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII the Church has exhorted her children to translate doctrine into action at the same time they are to wrest the wage earners from the demoralizing, dechristianizing influence of Communistic unionism.



Formation of Tertiary Youth

Discussion Guide on Perfection (8), by *Albert Nimeth O.F.M.*

1. To the casual observer they were doing the same chore. But there was a tremendous difference. The one lad was mowing the lawn, gritting his teeth and mumbling angry protests, which he did not dare to make audible. He had orders from his dad to do the job, or else. It was the "or else" that spurred him on. He was kicking against the goad. He feared disobedience and thus was laboring under a heavy yoke. The other lad was doing the same task. He too was cutting the lawn. But he thrilled the air with his merry whistle as the mower hummed across the green sward. He loved obedience and his burden was light.

It is not enough that we see our duty and do it. We must love it. With the love of choice. That will make a difference. One of the favorite sayings of St. Francis de Sales was that we ought to love obedience more than we fear disobedience. God does love a cheerful giver. As soon as we know the will of God, we ought to become attached to it in order to make lasting progress in the spiritual life.

a) Do we satisfy an obligation by fulfilling the letter of the law? How does a motive affect the fulfilment of an obligation?

b) In what spirit ought a Tertiary to obey lawful authority?

c) What do you think of the statement of St. Francis that we ought to love obedience more than fear disobedience? How could this affect your spiritual life?

2. The will of God is often painful to nature because it runs counter to evil tendencies. That is the burden we have to bear. But if we learn to love the will of God, it will bear us up. Often our trouble is that we stop short with the external task imposed, which is not always pleasant, and we do not see beyond to the lovable will of God. With the faith that is in us we can

penetrate the outward appearance to see the will of God as manifested by this or that precept.

By the same token we ought to love the instruments God employs to reveal his will. For that reason we ought to love the Church and her laws. We will love our lawful superiors, because to us they are the living interpreters of the will of God. There is no lesson more important, especially for young Tertiaries, than this one. To see only the human, often disagreeable accidents is to get a distorted and blurred view. It is the substance beneath these shadows which we ought to look for, and that substance is the Divine pleasure.

a) What attitude ought one to take when those in authority are of a disagreeable nature?

b) Do you recall anything in the life of St. Francis which indicated his attitude toward lawful authority? Recall his action toward the unworthy priest. What does this tell you?

c) Recount what happened at the trial of Christ when Pontius Pilate bragged about his authority. What answer did Christ give him? What does this tell you?

3. Soloviev, a fine Russian writer, gives us food for thought when he writes: "... in the Church under the appearance of a visible and human society is hidden the Divine substance . . . and all that may seem abnormal in the history of the Church belongs only to the human appearances and not to the Divine substance." In a similar way on a personal level, we have a definite sign of true formation in the spirit of St. Francis if we discern and love the will of God even though revealed to us by men full of defects.

4. The point is this: if we can bring ourselves to love the will of God regardless of what it demands, that love will be a guarantee of fidelity and perseverance.

It is this persevering fidelity which spells the difference between progress and stagnation on the way of perfection. Love will make us faithful in the least obligation, not for its own sake, because that is the make of a small mind, but for the sake of the greater thing, which is the will of God. Thus in the irksome details of daily living a person can and ought to love and respect the will of God. Speaking of the mission of the Third Order, Pope Pius XI says: "To the vows of obedience corresponds the spirit of obedience which enters all his devoted and generous sacrifices in obeying the commandments of God and the laws of the Church as well as the manifestations of authority and the *exigencies of daily duty*."

Just as our Lord is present in a small host, and even a particle of the host, as well as in a large host, so it is with the will of God. The smallest fragment of duty and obligation contains the will of God just as much as the important tasks of life, and we ought not overlook the least part of a thing so sacred.

a) Why is fidelity and perseverance so important in the spiritual life? Can you give examples of persons that have begun well but did not end well? Why do you think they did not stick to it? What is the percentage of mortality in your Third Order fraternity? How do you account for it?

b) Do you think love will stimulate greater fidelity?

c) Read what else Pope Pius XI had to say on the mission of the Third Order.

5. It is not merely a matter of adjusting ourselves to a precept or an obligation. It is more than that. It is a matter of adjusting ourselves to God by means of that precept or obligation. Whenever we are faithful to the will of God, we establish union with God. We have to understand that the union of our souls with God is a moral union, a union of wills. That is why it is important to seek out the will of God and conform to it. Whatever may be the occupation God demands of me, even the commonest and the roughest, God is there, because his will is there. The soul

with dull vision sees nothing more than the material obligation and when it desires to find God, it turns elsewhere to seek him in some devotional practice, but it does not find him, because God's will is not there. We find God only in the obligation that presses for the moment. When we thus understand our obligations, when we see God present in his will and know that we can meet him there, we can more earnestly plunge into the fulfilment of our duty in order to immerse ourselves more fully in God. How blind we are not to see God in our obligations. We miss so much.

a) What do you think of those people who keep harping on the sentence, "It is the law"? What does St. Paul say about "the Law" (Gal. 5, 18)? Read the entire letter of St. Paul to the Galatians.

b) Since our purpose in life is union with God, do you see from the above how we are to grow in perfection to the extent that we conform to God's will? Develop that idea a little more.

6. If it is the will of God which we seek and strive to follow, it matters little whether we are sent to pray or to work, to perform an agreeable or a disagreeable task; whether we be in high place or in lowly. As long as we are doing God's will, what should these things matter?

We never make a more foolish mistake than when we think that our sanctity and spiritual formation consist in certain devotions and devotional practices. Unfortunately, what we often seek from these are our own whims and likings. It is useless to put spirit and good will into them, for it will be a lot of wasted effort unless it is in keeping with God's will. Practices, prayers or mortifications suggested by our natural disposition or caprice of nature or the tastes of the human will are not the way to perfection. Sanctity is born of the will of God. It is for us to see, love and follow that will.

a) Are we ever allowed to do works of "supererogation"? Under what circumstances?

b) Is it better to pray or to work? This is purposely asked, to force a distinction.

THE THIRD ORDER APOSTOLATE

(Continuing page 240)

"Really, it is difficult to draw an exact line of demarcation beyond which the lay apostolate properly so called begins. Might we, for example, find a place in it for the education given either by the mother of a family or by men and women teachers filled with holy zeal in the pursuit of their teaching profession? Or too, for the behavior of a reputable, frankly Catholic physician, whose conscience never compromises when the natural and the divine law are at stake and who with all the forces at his command draws the line in favor of the Christian dignity of the houses where the sacred rights of their parenthood are concerned? Or, again, the position of a Catholic statesman toward a road housing policy for the benefit of the less well-to-do?"

"Many would incline to the negative in such cases, seeing in them only the highly laudable but yet obligatory fulfillment of their state of life. We know nevertheless how powerful and irreplaceable for the good of souls is the value of such simple fulfillment of vocational duty on the part of millions and millions of conscientious, exemplary faithful.

"Undoubtedly the lay apostolate in the proper sense is to a great extent organized Catholic Action and other institutions of apostolic activity approved by the Church. But apart from them, there can be and there are lay apostles both men and women who see the good which can be done, and see the opportunity and the means for it, and then proceed to do it, concerned solely about gaining souls for the truth and for grace." (Address to the World Congress of Lay Apostleship, Rome, October 14, 1951).

The text is clear, and therefore *nobody* can escape the duty of apostleship among his kind.

Essential Preparatory Action

Having stated what sort of apostolate we should perform, we must still define how it should be done. (On this subject

as well as in answer to the previous problem, there is a marvelous book by Stephane Joseph Piat O.F.M. entitled *Principles and Paradoxes of the Militant Life*, or briefly *The Militant Life*, published by Franciscan Herald Press. Anybody at all interested in what can be done in the field of the apostolate, and in how it can and should be done, will do well to invest in this 200-page volume. It is a book he may well keep thumbing for the rest of his life, it is so definitely a guide book on the subject. The present study might almost serve as a summary of that book, except that the present study is restricted to apostleship on the part of the Tertiary.)

How then is the Tertiary, as a child of St. Francis, and because he is a disciple of St. Francis, to go about the apostolate? Is it worthwhile putting the question?

We believe it is. There is still such a thing as uncontrolled activism without sufficiently defined clearness of aim and means. There are above all too many unsettled minds without any effective outlet for their generous ardor, and it is not enough to say to them: Go to work, it is for God to pass judgment on the result. Their unsettled state has its roots in something else which could well be a bad point of departure for the apostolate, or prove a bad way to go about it.

For us as children of St. Francis there are certain traditional principles which we must never forget. We are confronted in them with the sentiments and the spirit of St. Francis, and with his way of appraising the things of God and plying the work of God.

There is an admirable chapter in Fr. Agostino Gemelli's book *Franciscanism*, in which he undertakes to describe "Franciscan Action." Allow me to single out the leading ideas for such of my readers as do not have the leisure to consult the book itself.

1. It is by means of our will enlightened by the understanding that we say "I will," and proceed to act.

But we are creatures, subject to our Creator and to all the laws of nature. We are not altogether independent; our liberty consists in our being free to choose to do what is good. Ultimately the goal set for our activity is both our natural and our supernatural goal.

In any event, therefore, we must look to God, our Creator and Master, in order to understand what we have to do. That is what we call conforming or "adjusting our will to the will of God." Inasmuch as we have been made by God, we have been made for God, and we may not do anything independently of God,
everything we do takes on a religious character.

2. Identifying our will with the will of God, acting conformably to the will of God, is what is called "interior formation" or development.

But that is carried out by eliminating progressively all the impulses of nature which combine to resist the will of God; transforming our heart; generously making the spiritual effort to conquer our lower movements and to unite ourself with God.

Here we must remember as our point of departure the fact of sin and of our corrupt nature, and secondly the unquestionable possibility of succeeding in this transformation.

The encounter of these two elements in us causes *everything we do to be an interior drama*, a conflict between our selfish inclinations on one side and on the other the will of God made known by his law and by our external circumstances.

(One of the most common threats to perseverance in active Tertiaryism is just this way nature has of asserting itself and leading the Tertiary to forget his holy aims, purposes, and resolutions the moment anything disagreeable to him turns up. The director or the officers or the members do something or take measures that the Tertiary does not like, that perhaps directly offend or even only unintentionally slight him, and that is the

end of that Tertiary's active cooperation. Yes indeed, there is need of preparatory action if any form of external action is to be assured!)

3. What means have we at our disposal to carry on such action?

There is *our will*, a formidable interior power—which we have to train and put in action—at every age—to make it strong and effective in making the right choice.

There is *grace*, for "Without me you can do nothing." The work is too lofty, too grand. We have to have this grace—have to increase it—have to develop it—have to know how to use it. It too has to be potent and effective.

This combination of human effort and Divine grace will supply the victory over the deadweight of nature.

Necessary— I Repeat

There may be those who will say here "All this is far removed from the apostolate!"

Rather, realize that herewith we are doing no more than declaring that there is a necessary condition, a *sine qua non* of any kind of apostolate, even the most modest; that preparatory to any exterior action there must be a certain indisputable interior action; that interior asceticism must precede the apostolate.

It is because certain people have let this fact too far from sight that they "break their nose" and come apart, and that can have serious consequences.

Whether it be the result of ignorance or of negligence, or forgetfulness, or pride of business, or outright contempt, it is always seriously harmful,

to the person himself,

to the activity he is pursuing,

to the beneficiaries of the activity,

because with fatal consistency action on our part that is not clearly defined and disciplined runs a great risk of wasting the externals the reserves of our nature.

Of course, the other side of the imperative must not be forgotten—there must be action!

Our Savior gives us the example of the sequence of it.

A Christian is expected to make a reality of "Thy kingdom come."

St. Francis treads in the footsteps of Christ: apostolic man that he was, he chose the apostolate; and he launched his children on that course.

The present Pope appeals to the urgent need of action.

We are well aware also that all the rule of the Third Order, while first of all assuring the development of the interior life, is altogether calculated as a powerful thrust toward fulfilling the duties of our state of life and so toward the apostolate.

Franciscan Action

Only, be it noted, external activity in St. Francis' case bears an aspect of its own. Let us sum up in three statements the essential traits of the Franciscan attitude regarding external activity:

The activity at the first is interior, and it passes from there to the exterior.

The essential part of the activity is union with Christ.

The originality of St. Francis lies not in having joined prayer and activity in life but in his having made them two means of one and the same operation—elevation toward God.

For St. Francis the problem of "spiritualizing action" did not exist at all. He knew nothing of that modern restlessness which finds expression in the words, "We are overloaded, we have no time for prayer."

To the questions, how are we to be active and yet to pray in the midst of the world, in our relations with it, and how are we to sanctify ourselves while we remain in the world, St. Francis replied: "By acting the way Christ acted."

To Christ, action, activity, meant doing the will of his Father. For us, action should mean uniting our will with that of Christ—doing the will of our Father!

Only one thing is necessary: to cleave to God alone—to keep united with Christ. Only one thing matters: the will of God!

Should the preference be given to action or to prayer? The question does not arise at all. It is solved by "the will of God," as we know it from experience, from the

circumstances, from the advice of prudent persons.

(Viewed as God's will and so performed, prayer is action and action is prayer.) And this solution of the prayer-action problem winds up with the same result—union with God, holiness.

Thus it is not even necessary to inject any formula of prayer into the action, as is sometimes recommended. And really, it must be admitted that that is not always even feasible: the action itself, by itself and in itself, supplies the requisite elevation of the soul Godward and puts it in contact with God if it means interpreting life's several actions as the will of God. Says Father Gemelli:

"The originality of St. Francis is in having sought not so much a mixed life, which other saints had already taught, but *a life of supernatural action* out in the world, a life that is not content with having prayer and action joined in partnership, but wherein prayer and action are no longer anything but two aspects of the same elevation to God.

"This principle of activity determines the historical function of Franciscanism."

If our brothers and sisters in the Third Order endeavor to put these considerations into practice, they will be not only obeying their rule but also giving the Church what she hopes for from them—their every activity thus proves a source of sanctification.

(Thus, again, all the problem of the Tertiary apostolate is not so much a frantic search for "something to do"; it consists in putting into life—their own life and, so to say by osmosis, or by contagion if you will, the life of others—the spirit of seeing God's will in everything we must do and do do. Do, act—but by no means be panicked and stampeded. Take a generous part in Catholic Action projects, in the projects taken up by your federation of provinces and by your local fraternity. But do what you do prayerfully, mindful of God's will in it. Thus you save and sanctify yourself and others.)

What more can anybody want? •



Want something by way of a manual to inspire and guide your societies and action groups? There is a volume by Stephane Joseph Piat O.F.M. which has had admirable success in that respect in its original French. To give readers of English the full benefit of the author's savory thought the work is now available in English translation as *Principles and Paradoxes of the Militant Life*, or simply *The Militant Life*. It might seem to some that an adaptation of the original would have been advisable, but for various reasons a literal translation was regarded as more fair to the author and his spirit as well as to the cause he advances. Any needed adaptation can readily be made; not so simple, fair and forceful would have been any necessarily arbitrary interference with his trenchant matter and manner. The appeal is universal. Tertiaries and their directors will find in it endless conference material. 207 pages, \$2.75. Franciscan Herald Press. •

Lives? Lives in content and style tailored to suit your taste.

To begin with, there is *Stone in the King's Highway*, a life of Chinese missionary Bishop Francis X. Ford of Maryknoll by Superior General Bishop Raymond A. Lane. A chapter interestingly summarizing the life of the martyr bishop is followed by eleven additional chapters in which the author welds into remarkable essays the saintly bishop's correspondence on subjects pertaining to mission endeavor in China today. The whole is done so masterfully that it reads like a continuous life, with action instead of discussion as the theme, while what Bishop Ford has to say on such points as vocation to the missions, the character of the Chinese people, mission methods, Communism in China, and kindred subjects is of paramount merit. 300 pages, \$3.00. McMullen. •

Woman of Decision, by Sr. Blanche Marie McEniry, is the life of Mother Mary

Xavier Mehegan (1825-1915), founder of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth of Convent N.J. It is the story of a forthright woman steadily confronted with momentous decisions, from the time when as a girl she chose America to be her home to the day she entered the Sisters of Charity, and then, through vicissitudes not unusual in those days, found herself the head of a distinct congregation on which she was destined to leave the impress of her resolute spirit. Ninety decisive years of ecclesiastical and national history are bound up with the narrative. One slip: the trouble in the 50's came from the American Party; the A.P.A. was of the 90's. 240 pages, \$3.50. McMullen. •

Eddie Doherty authors an extended life of *Matt Talbot*. There are few recorded facts in the holy man's life, but with a journalist's flair for opportunity the author has made the most of incidental events and movements to turn out a very readable book indeed. There is a good closeup of the labor disturbances of the day, of the movement for Irish independence with the Easter rebellion, of the modus operandi of Alcoholics Anonymous, of saints past and present to whom Matt was devoted. Nowhere, however, is the man himself lost to sight with his penitential life, his sacrifices for the missions, his marvelous devotion to his God in the churches and to his neighbor. 200 pages, \$2.75. Bruce. •

Fictionalized and written with the young in view is *God and the General's Daughter*, by Anne Heagney—the life, up to her entry in the convent, of the first New England born nun, Frances Allen, daughter of the redoubtable Revolutionary General Ethan Allen. The greater part of the book is taken up, naturally, with Miss Allen's life amid the agnosticism which marked her teen years. There came the time of her first romance, and then her stay in the convent school of the Notre

Dames in Montreal, where she acquires not only the French she desired but also the call to the Faith and to the religious life. Well told, with a wealth of incident and pathos, against a well drawn background of New England life in the early 1800's. 185 pages, \$3.00. Bruce.

Incidentally, there should be a law agin books with only numbers for chapter headings, but nary a title, and so no table of contents. •

A worthy manual for the personal and pastoral guidance of the priest is Vincentian Father Thomas O'Donnell's *The Priest of Today*. It is not a new book, but it goes on having new editions (seven since 1909). The spirit of the book is nicely indicated when in a letter to the author the late Cardinal Glennon speaks of priests "who can lead without being demagogues, who can be cultured without being conceited, who can be pious without being hypocrites, who can walk on the world's highways and yet keep their souls in peace," and ends saying: "Your book encourages them in their going . . . and helps them remain true to their trust and efficient in their accredited commission." 340 pages, \$3.50. McMullen distributors. •

Treated with becoming dignity is *Six O'Clock Mass* by Msgr. Maurice S. Sheedy, pages in novel form from the notebook of a pastor, sketching the characters of assorted members of his daily congregation. A diversified group they are, sketched true to life, each with a lasting impression for the reader's spiritual edification, mingling the humorous and the pathetic lavishly, and finding a special place for each character at some particular point of our Lord's all-embracing holy Sacrifice. You will like it—and never be the worse for it. 190 pages, \$2.75. Farrar Straus and Young. •

There is a series of symposia on the religious life, especially as affecting sisters, published by Blackfriars Publications, London. No. III in the series, just out in English (the original is French), is on *Obedience*. Three other subjects, I, II and IV, are: Religious Sisters, Vocation, and Poverty, the latter to appear

shortly. The volume on Obedience comprises 18 chapters, with a preface, an introduction and a conclusion, all by various religious, men and women. The chapters are grouped in four parts, the first treating the historical aspects, the second the doctrine, the third the psychology, and the fourth the experimental or practical side of obedience as touching superiors and subjects. The whole is so calculated that each part presents a systematic treatise. For the average religious, in particular for masters. 290 pages. •

For those placed in leadership or aspiring to it there is Eric Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics*. It is submitted as "an introductory essay," but it has nothing elementary or amateurish about it, much less anything to do with office-seeking and holding. It has to do with the principles of statesmanship and their various forms of expression and function in history. 200 pages, \$3.00. University of Chicago Press. •

Hilary McDonagh O.F.M. of the English province is the author of *The Little Manual of the Third Order of St. Francis*. The contents are in three parts: the Third Order and its rule; the ceremonial, Latin and English, for the various functions; and prayers, devotions and spiritual exercises, with stress on Franciscan material, a feature which we find particularly commendable. Also the compact, handy format and general easy readability are distinct assets. Its version of the rule seems to have only local sanction: a universally uniform English version were certainly desirable. 135 pages, 4¼x5½, stiff paper cover. St. Anthony's Press, London. •

Among NCWC Confraternity publications note *Religious Vacation School Manual* for teachers of children attending public school grades I and II, prepared by Sr. M. Rosalia, M.H.S.H. Besides the incidental doctrine in outline and aim as well as direction for the catechist, there are suggestions for projects and programs of instruction and recreation, with an appendix of reference lists on visual aids, readings for teachers, parents and chil-

dren, etc. 112 pages, 50c, paper. St. Anthony Guild Press. •

Our Lady of Springtime by Dominican Sr. M. Jean Dorcy is a book of verse and silhouettes on Marian themes. Verse and drawings are exquisite in mood and execution, making it a fine presentation piece, or an item for any collector of choice Mariana. 48 pages, hard bound, \$1.25. St. Anthony Guild Press. •

Conventual Fr. Jeffrey Keefe is the author of a pointed pamphlet on the nature and validity of miracles: *Miracles Facts or Fantasies?* Tops for your pamphlet rack. 5c. St. Anthony Guild Press. •

A gem is the new *Little Office of the B. V. Mary* published by Franciscan Herald Press. Dark blue cover with gold leaf

stampings, and the slimmest format for the 120 pages of the well bound book are some of the external features. The psalms are in the readable, understandable translation of Msgr. Knox. The arrangement is the simplest conceivable; the clear table of contents and the changing cursory head recto make it easy to find your way about. Meant especially for seculars, in particular for secular Tertiaries. Paper 65 cents, fabricoid cover \$1.25. •

Fr. Dermot Dunn O.F.M. Conv. has compiled a *Franciscan Tertiaries Word-book*, listing 22 pages of terms that keep recurring in Tertiary literature and that sometimes puzzle the reader. A welcome aid. 25 cents. Conventual Franciscan Publications. Rensselaer. •



ITEMS of INTEREST

May 31 marked the death of a venerable Tertiary and promoter of the Third Order, Bishop Joseph F. Busch of St. Cloud Minn. He will be remembered in particular for his part in the second national congress of our Third Order in New York City in 1926, where he addressed the congressists and presided at the priests' meeting. Following the New York congress he cherished the plan of establishing the Third Order throughout his diocese. If lack of personnel for the work at the time was in part responsible for failure of the plan, it never changed his Excellency's attitude toward the order.

Bishop Busch was born April 18, 1866, and was ordained July 28, 1889. He was appointed bishop of the diocese of Lead (now diocese of Rapid City) S. D. in 1910 and transferred to St. Cloud in 1915. He was thus in his 64th year as a priest and his 44th year as a bishop—the 87th of his life, remaining comparatively active to the last. God rest his devoted soul. •

The institute for Third Order leaders held at St. Peter's, Chicago, June 9-11, proved to be countrywide in attendance

as well as in scope and intention. Present were federation chairman Fr. Adolph Bernholz, vice chairman Fr. Conrad Polzer, and secretary Fr. Philip Marquard, with some 25 other priests and friars, an apostolic college of Sister moderators (twelve), and some 70 secular Tertiaries for a total of well over a hundred key figures.

The deliberations of the institute centered in the aim of spiritual formation that shall make the Tertiaries conscious of their status as a religious order and a brotherhood. A series of thirteen topics bearing on that idea was prepared in outline and submitted to participants in advance of the institute and during it. Thus presented, the program proved a great economy of time and effort, leaving little room for divagation and not hewing to the line.

The outlines were the work of past national secretary Fr. Maximus Poppy. Besides his thirty-five years of experience in Third Order work on fraternity and provincial and national levels, he had this particular set of outlines fire-tested as material for sessions of his local Fran-

ciscan study club, an institution which has just completed its twentieth successful year. The outlines are nothing if not specific and practical.

Since the outlines have permanent value, and are so explicit and at the same time so easily adaptable for use in whole or in part, in institutes, study clubs, and congresses regional and provincial, The Study Club, 3200 Meramec St., St. Louis 18, Mo., is making them available for general distribution at 60 cents a set.

The annual Greater Cincinnati pilgrimage to St. Anthony's shrine at Mt. Airy June 14 this year took on the features of a seventh centenary tribute to St. Clare of Assisi. Thirteen fraternities of the area participated, including St. Francis Seminary fraternity and three further junior groups.

Observances included a procession of 450 Tertiaries along the mile-long road uphill to the shrine, where some 300 additional people joined them in solemn high Mass celebrated by Fr. Provincial Vincent Kroger. Fr. Mel Brady preached the sermon on St. Clare. Afternoon services, attended by quite 1000 people, included the fraternity meeting ritual, sermon, and Benediction. The services were followed by a special panel on Tertiary topics, led by Major S. G. Deans of Lowpoint Ill., speaking on the Third Order as a stepping stone to sanctity. Other speakers were Joseph Lonneman of Covington Ky., and Ralph Schlueter of St. Anthony junior fraternity.

Our thanks to Executive Treasurer William E. Corcoran for the communication.

The fourth provincial congress of Immaculate Conception province (2) held at Brooklyn May 15 and 16 assembled some 1500 delegates from the Eastern seaboard and Canada. In line with their deliberations on the improvement of social conditions through ideal homes and ideal youth, the delegates selected as Tertiary mother of the year Mrs. Accursia Indelicato, mother of 14 children, five of whom are convent sisters. Mrs. Indelicato is a member of St. Leonard's fraternity, Boston.

The resolutions impressed on each Tertiary the duty of bringing the Gospel message to the individual, to the home and to society generally by intensive observance of the rule and spirit of St. Francis, notably as regards the Gospel concept of neighbor: the peace and good will desired by every world citizen stand and fall with that Christo-Franciscan program.

The Poor Clare community of St. Clare Monastery, 720 Henry Clay Ave., New Orleans 18, La., have prepared a device to publicize life in their order, in this seventh centenary year of their holy founder St. Clare. The main feature of the device is a series of one hundred 2 x 2 inch slides in black and white for use in a still projector, covering every angle of a Poor Clare monastery. The nuns will be glad to send the file to anybody desiring to show the slides to interested groups, preferably young ladies. With the file comes a brief description of the several scenes, together with literature for distribution, and as advertising features seven large posters and six-inch dolls dressed as Poor Clares. The only cost to the user would be the remailing of the compact slide file.—Sr. M. Bernadette.

Need it be said that interesting the public in the contemplative life in these critical times is almost a must? Nothing but the grace and blessing of God can extricate the world from the mess into which it has plunged itself, and the key to that grace and blessing is prayer and sacrifice, eminently the features of the contemplative life such as that of the Poor Clares.

We avail ourselves of the opportunity to recall the classic stage play on the life of St. Clare published by the Poor Clare Nuns of Our Lady of Guadalupe Monastery, Box 285-C, Roswell N.M. *Candle in Umbria* is the title. Single copy \$1.00.

A note in *The Troubadour*, Tertiary bulletin of Bishop Timon High School, Buffalo, informs us that Fr. Claude Keane, founding principal of that school and now Catholic chaplain at the University of Maryland, has begun a Third Order group

at that university. The first fruits were received February 24.

Other school groups in the Buffalo area are at Mt. Mercy Academy, Bishop McMahon High School, Sacred Heart Academy, Father Baker High School, Bishop O'Hern High School, the Little Seminary, Stella Niagara Academy, Rosary Hill College, and presently Bishop Quigley High School. •

The 1953 Year Book of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, a calendar format book of some 58 reader pages, comes replete with historical sketches past and present, tableaux from modern mission fields, inspirational articles, including one on *The Sense of Vocation* by Archbishop Cushing, and stories with mission settings. All profusely illustrated, in colors as well as black and white.

A feature is the spread on pages 8 and 9 graphically picturing the history and work of the sisterhood throughout the world. Striking are the legends: "According to the desire of the Holy See, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary will establish themselves in even the most dangerous and distant foreign missions"—taken from the constitutions of the sisterhood; and, "In their 414 houses, 9000 religious of 59 nationalities devote themselves to all kinds of work, with children, the poor, the sick"—and that mainly in mission territories.

Marginal to the spread are the pictures of Mother Mary of the Passion Chappotin (1839-1904), founder of the sisters, of Sr. Mary Assunta (1878-1905), and of the Boxer martyrs of 1900. The latter were formally beatified in 1932; the two former, representing so to say the great and the little of the community, are candidates for beatification. A further marginal entry notes 24 categories, embracing in all 1781 institutions, of educational work, medical and social work, and direct apostolate throughout the world. •

Speaking of the atrocities in China and elsewhere under Communist domination, there is the little Franciscan country of Albania, down by the Adriatic

sea next door to friend Tito's Yugoslavia. This used to be real Franciscan territory, with a patriotic Franciscan history dating from the founding of the order there in St. Francis' day, down through time. The Franciscans were a good part of the country's scholars and patriots as well as of their clergy and hierarchy.

Today? Nobody has all the story, but here are some of the facts. In the last eight years beginning with 1946, the archdiocese of Scutari has been without a shepherd; seven of its priests and a seminarian have been shot, a priest and a lay brother clubbed to death, six further priests have died of torture, by poison, or from privations in prison, nine priests are serving prison terms, and other religious especially Franciscans are in prison.

The Franciscan archbishop of Durazzo, Msgr. Prennushi, was arrested in 1947 and has died since of loss of blood following tortures; likewise two priests; a third one has been shot; four priests and a seminarian are in prison.

The diocese of Alessio is vacant since 1944; three of its priests have died of torture and one by bullet, three others are imprisoned following torture. Bishop George Volaj, arrested in 1946, while in a state of death agony from torture was shot and thrown into the sewer in March 1947; two other priests were shot, another died of cold and hardship in detention, three others and a seminarian were arrested and tortured, and are now confined in prison.

Bishop Gjini of Mirdizia was held a prisoner in a cell 39 inches square for eight months, and horribly tortured. They shot him finally, along with 18 other persons, while he was extending his right hand in blessing. One of his priests was buried alive, three others died of torture, one priest and two seminarians are in prison.—Data from *Le Missioni Francescane* O.F.M.

Even if guilty of the worst crimes, these people could not have been treated worse. But justice plays no part in their suffering. Just arbitrary venom. •

CALENDAR OF PLENARY INDULGENCES

August

2. Portiuncula, tories, quories (not transferable this year).
7. Bl. Agathangel and Cassian M. 1 Or.
9. St. John Mary Vianney C. 3 Or.
12. Seventy Centenary of St. Clare V. 2 Or.—G.A. & P.I.
15. Assumption. G.A. & P.I.*
16. St. Joachim C.—The five Sundays before the feast of the Stigmata.
17. St. Roch C. 3 Or. Fran. & Conv. (Cap. Aug. 26)
19. St. Louis B. C. 1 Or.
25. St. Louis King C. Patron 3 Or.—G.A. & P.I.
26. Bl. Bernard of Offida C. 1 Or., Fran. & Conv. (Cap. Sept. 1).—St. Roch, Cap. (see Aug. 17).—Seven Joys, Conv. (see Aug. 27).
27. Seven Joys B.V.M. G.A. & P.I.—Fran. & Cap. (Conv. Aug. 26).

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GENERALLY

On the day of reception and the day of profession.

On the day of the monthly meeting.

On two days of the month at choice.*

On each Tuesday (St. Anthony). Visit to exposed Blessed Sacrament.

On each of twelve successive first Saturdays of the month. Prayers in honor of the Immaculate Conception. The first Sundays may be observed instead.

On the seventeenth of any month. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament exposed and devotions to St. Paschal.

On each of any six Sundays of the year, with prayers in honor of St. Louis the Bishop, with a special plenary indulgence if the Sundays are observed successively.

On the titular feast of a Franciscan church.

*Signifies an indulgence that can be gained only by members whereas the other indulgences can be gained by all who visit a church of the order.

General conditions besides particular conditions specified: Confession, communion, visit to a church of the order, one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Form of the General Absolution as given by any confessor in the confessional: Auctoritate a Summis Pontificibus tibi concessa plenariam omnium peccatorum tuorum indulgentiam tibi impertior. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

OBITUARY

Your prayers are requested for the repose of the souls of the following departed members of the three Orders of St. Francis:

Most Rev. Joseph F. Busch, St. Cloud, Minn.

Br. Emeran Holbeck (6)

Sr. M. Vita Moore (50), Sr. M. Carmel Brockmann (50), Sr. M. Irene Shevek (81), Sr. M. Amantia Albert (81).

Numbers of Sisters communities according to the Official Catholic Directory.

Chicago: Bernard Hartnady, Eliz. Keim, Mary Eagan, Johanna Wagner, Eliz. Degnan—**Cleveland:** Frank Geis, Marg. Kilcoyne—**Detroit:** Rose Moeller, Benora Daher, Cath. Maher—**Memphis:** Mary Joyce—**Nashville:** Mary Reese, Mary Williams, Nora Johnson, Ella Breen—**Patterson:** Mary Williams, Marg. Nugent—**Perkins:** Donald Verbrigghe—**St. Louis:** Mary Keating, Amalia Eschbacher, Marie Kacer, Mary Duffy, Mary Conway, Essie Maloney, Cath. Lorenz, Maria Reichle.

Also, **Chicago:** Cath. Gallagher, Cath. Sweeney, Frances Burbach, Marg. Dixon, Mary Dovie, Eliz. Martin—**Dallas:** Marg. Kelly, Kate Corcoran—**Fond du Lac:** Mary Neis—**Cincinnati:** Mathilda Agricola.

Deadline the 28th of the month.



Put THE FORUM on your mailing list for current Obituary notices of your community or Fraternity. THE FORUM, 5045 S. Laramie Street, Chicago 9, Illinois

